

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A process for monitoring ~~the consumptions of~~ a plurality of franking machines, wherein at least one of the franking machines is connected to a public communications network and at least another one of the franking machines is not connected to the public communications network, through a public communication network, at least one of the franking machines being electrically isolated from the public communications network and at least one of the franking machines being in communication with the public communications network, the process comprising the steps of:

first establishing a link with between a management server ~~through~~ on the public communications network, ~~in accordance with a protocol of communication, via at least one and a~~ supervision terminal on the public communications network, wherein the supervision terminal is independent from which the plurality of franking machines is independent; and

~~subsequently proceeding with an exchange of~~ exchanging data between the supervision terminal and the management server ~~during which a user (1) acquires at~~

~~the supervision terminal a~~ over the established link, including transmitting a current invoicing index indicative of corresponding to the at least one ~~of the isolated~~ franking machines machine not connected to the public communications network to the management server and (2) ~~receives a~~ transmitting a code of authorization to frank in order to ~~validate the~~ for validating subsequent frankings of the at least one ~~of the isolated~~ franking machines machine not connected to the network to the supervision terminal,

wherein ~~said step of data exchange~~ exchanging data further comprises[:]
displaying[,] at the supervision terminal [(1)] a list of the entire plurality of franking machines[,] and (2) ~~for each one of the plurality of franking machines,~~ a last invoicing index validated by the management server corresponding to each of the plurality of franking machines.

2. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the protocol of communication used for establishing a link with the management server is a Videotex protocol, ~~such as teletel protocol.~~

3. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the protocol of communication used for establishing a link with the management server is ~~a protocol of~~ TCP/IP type.

4. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of data exchange~~ exchanging data further comprises: ~~the user~~ entering into the supervision terminal an identifier including at least one of a password and a personal identification number.

5. (canceled):

6. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein ~~said step of data exchange~~ exchanging data further comprises displaying, at the supervision terminal, one of a selectable plurality of tables and statistics in graph form relating to a ~~list~~ set of printing heads of the plurality of franking machines.

7. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the code of authorization to frank comprises information corresponding to ~~indicative of one of~~ (1) an authorized maximum amount of credit, (2) an authorized maximum amount of consumption, and (3) a period of franking.

8. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the code of authorization to frank is obtained by a calculation ~~from one of~~ based upon the current invoicing index ~~and a serial number of a printing head~~.

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9. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the code of authorization to frank is obtained by a calculation ~~from~~ based upon a current date.

10. (currently amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the code of authorization to frank is obtained by a calculation ~~from~~ based upon ~~information indicative of one or~~ more of (1) a maximum amount of credit, (2) a maximum amount of authorized consumption, and (3) an authorized period of franking.

11. (previously amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the protocol of communication used for establishing a link with the management server is a protocol of telephonic communication of a vocal synthesis type.

12. (canceled):

13. (canceled):

14. (new): The process of claim 2, wherein the protocol of communication is a teletel protocol.

15. (new): A process for monitoring the consumptions of a plurality of franking machines through a public communication network, at least one of the franking machines being unconnected to the public communications network and at least another one of the franking machines being connected to the public communications network, the process comprising the steps of:

first establishing a link with a management server through the public communications network, in accordance with a protocol of communication, via at least one supervision terminal, each at least one supervision terminal being independent of the plurality of franking machines; and

subsequently proceeding with an exchange of data between the supervision terminal and the management server during which a user (1) inputs at the supervision terminal a current invoicing index indicative of the at least one unconnected franking machine and (2) receives a code of authorization to frank in order to validate the subsequent frankings of the at least one unconnected franking machines.

16 (new): The process of claim 15, wherein said step of data exchange further comprises displaying, at the supervision terminal (1) a list of the plurality of franking machines, and (2) for each one of the plurality of franking machines, a last invoicing index validated by the management server.

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17. (new): The process of claim 1, wherein the code of authorization to frank is obtained by a calculation based upon a serial number of a printing head.